

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/718,388
Response dated September 22, 2003
Reply to OA of May 20, 2003

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 13 and 29 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claim 1 and add new claim 30 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for adhering and proliferating epithelial cells, which comprises the steps of:

inoculating, culturing and then treating by a treatment selected from freezing, drying and irradiating, in a culture vessel, fibroblasts derived from a mammal,

separating the treated fibroblasts from said culture vessel on which the fibroblasts were cultured and treated, so as to leave an extracellular matrix on a surface of said culture vessel, and then

inoculating and culturing the epithelial cells in said culture vessel.

2. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein 50% or more of the treated fibroblasts are separated from the culture vessel.

3. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the treated fibroblasts are separated from the culture vessel entirely.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said fibroblasts are treated by at least one selected from the group consisting of β ray, γ ray, X-ray, electron beam and UV ray.

6. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said treating step of fibroblasts comprises repeating one treatment selected from the group consisting of freezing, drying and irradiating.

7. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said treating step of fibroblasts comprises repeating exposure to at least one selected from the group consisting of β ray, γ ray, electron beam, UV ray and X-ray.

8. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said fibroblasts are treated by a combination of at least two treatments selected from the group consisting of freezing, drying and irradiating.

9. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein fibroblasts are treated by at least one selected from the group consisting of β ray, γ ray, electron beam, UV ray and X-ray.

10. (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said fibroblasts are 3T3 mouse embryo fibroblasts.

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11. (Canceled).

12. (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, in which said epithelial cells are epidermal cells.

13. (Currently Canceled).

14. (Previously Presented): An epidermal cell sheet prepared from epithelial cells that are epidermal cells, cultured using the method according to Claim 1.

15. (Previously Presented): An epidermal cell suspension prepared from epithelial cells that are epidermal cells, cultured using the method according to Claim 1.

16-29. (Canceled).

30. (New): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the treated fibroblasts are separated entirely from said culture vessel by rinsing the culture surface with an isotonic solution.